

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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SUBJECT: REMARKS BY DEFENSE SECRETARY ON U.S. ALERT

FOLLOWING IS EXCERPT OF REMARKS ON US ALERT AND MIDDLE-
EAST MADE BY LORD CARRINGTON IN HOUSE OF LORDS ON OCT.

31: "...THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE GRAVEST SITUATION
CONFRONTING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TODAY IS THE
SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WE MUST ALL HOPE THAT
THE BITTER FIGHTING WHICH BROKE OUT ON OCTOBER 6 HAS
NOW BEEN BROUGHT TO AN END. OUR FIRST OBJECTIVE MUST BE
TO SEE THAT THE CEASEFIRE CALLED FOR BY THE SECURITY
COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 22 IS OBSERVED. THAT IS WHY WE SUP-
PORTED THE IMMEDIATE SETTING UP OF THE UNITED NATIONS

EMERGENCY FORCE TO SUPERVISE THE TRUCE. THE SECURITY
COUNCIL RESOLUTION EXCLUDED FORCES FROM THE PERMANENT
MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND ACCORDINGLY, AS YOUR LORDSHIPS
WILL BE AWARE, THERE WILL BE NO BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE
EMERGENCY FORCE. BUT I AM GLAD TO SAY THAT AIRCRAFT OF
THE ROYAL AIR FORCE WERE QUICKLY MADE AVAILABLE TO CARRY
AUSTRIAN, SWEDISH AND FINNISH CONTINGENTS FROM THE UNITED
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NATIONS FORCE IN CYPRUS TO EGYPT TO FORM THE NUCLEUS OF

THE NEW FORCE...AND IN THE LONGER TERM WE WOULD BE READY TO PROVIDE A BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO ANY FORCE GIVEN THE WIDER TASK OF GUARANTEEING A SETTLEMENT BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAEL.

"I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF PUTTING THE PRE-CAUTIONARY ALERT OF THE UNITED STATES FORCES INTO PERSPECTIVE. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAVE AT THEIR DISPOSAL GREAT INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES, ON THE BASIS OF WHICH THEY FORESAW A POTENTIALLY CRITICAL SITUATION ARISING. THERE SEEMED A REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE FORCES OF THE TWO SUPER-POWERS MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES FACE TO FACE ON THE GROUND IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ON THE

BASIS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT BELIEVE THAT THIS POSSIBILITY DID INDEED EXIST. PRESIDENT NIXON MADE HIS RESPONSE AND THE CRISIS PASSED.

"AS MY RIGHT HONOURABLE FRIEND THE PRIME MINISTER MADE CLEAR YESTERDAY IN ANOTHER PLACE, NATO AS SUCH WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED, ALTHOUGH THE NATO COUNCIL HAS OF COURSE BEEN CLOSELY FOLLOWING EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST EVER SINCE THE CRISIS BEGAN. THE PRESIDENT'S ACTION INVOLVED AMERICAN FORCES ONLY AND THOSE FORCES WERE PLACED ON A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF ALERT WHICH DID NOT INVOLVE THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF ACTION. WE WERE INVOLVED AT AN EARLY STAGE AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES, WE SHOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN CONSULTED BEFORE THERE WAS ANY QUESTION OF OPERATIONAL USE BEING MADE OF FACILITIES IN THIS COUNTRY.

..."THE GOVERNMENT HAVE TAKEN THE VIEW THROUGHOUT THE PRESENT CRISIS THAT WE MUST SET OURSELVES TWO OBJECTIVES: AN END TO THE FIGHTING AND AN URGENT START

TO NEGOTIATIONS FOR A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT. UNLESS THOSE NEGOTIATIONS START SOON, THERE IS A RISK THAT THE CEASEFIRE ITSELF WILL RAPIDLY BE UNDERMINED, AND WE SHALL RETURN TO THE DANGEROUS AND FRUSTRATING STALEMATE OF THESE LAST SIX YEARS. THE GOVERNMENT ARE THEREFORE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL THOSE CONCERNED ABOUT

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THE NEXT STEP..."

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